ROPE SPINNING

D. W. PINKNEY

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ROPE SPINNING

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How to Hold the Rope Before Spinning Crinoline

[*Frontispiece*

ROPE SPINNING

BY
D. W. PINKNEY
WITH A SPECIAL CHAPTER ON
HOW TO USE THE LARIAT
BY
DON POTTER

ILLUSTRATED

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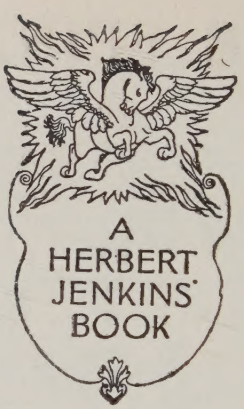

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INTRODUCTION

ROPE SPINNING is an art, and, as is the case with all forms of art, perfection can only be gained by much application and study. But the results obtained by a reasonable amount of effort and practice will fully reward the beginner for his exertions. It is becoming increasingly popular, and during the last year many thousands of scouts alone have learned the simple spins.

Those who have seen Don Potter manipulate a spinning rope, will freely admit that the effect is one of grace and charm, and that the various evolutions and tricks which he performs are full of real fascination.

Rope spinning is wonderful exercise; it is conducive to poise, grace, and agility, and in some respects it is an ideal form of physical culture. It requires just that co-ordination of eye and hand which will be found of in-

estimable value in all other sports and games of skill.

No better method of cultivating the mind and body simultaneously could possibly be found than by learning to spin a rope.

As far as children are concerned, rope spinning improves them both mentally and physically, renders their ordinary tasks easier of acquisition, and at the same time gives them the fun and pleasure of learning an art and sport combined. Furthermore, they obtain results in direct proportion to their efforts, a factor of vital psychological importance in all forms of training and education.

It is, of course, particularly suitable to Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, but it can be learned by young and old alike. The writer has taught several Girl Guides to spin a rope, and found them just as quickly able to pick it up as boys—in some cases more so. Girl Guides are beginning to realise its fascination, and before long the Scouts will find them keen and graceful competitors.

Some people seem to learn it quickly. Others have to exercise considerable patience before they are able to persuade the rope to

spin properly, and there certainly are times when it seems to behave like an angry snake, coiling itself round your limbs, eluding your every grasp and doing everything except bite.

But the reward comes when, after due perseverance, the loop revolves neatly round the body, or swings in graceful curves and circles at the will of the manipulator.

The writer's strong advice is, "Learn to spin a rope," and once you have got hold of the Hand-round or Crinoline, the fascination of the art will grip you, and you will determine to master the more difficult feats.

In the following pages will be found descriptions of the rope itself, and carefully detailed instructions in the various ways of spinning it.

These instructions have been drawn up with great exactitude, and will enable anyone completely ignorant of rope spinning to learn the various spins described. It is a good plan for the learner to get a second party to read the descriptions aloud whilst the learner himself carries them out with the rope in hand.

The first chapter should be followed with

especial care, as once its contents have been mastered, the subsequent descriptions will be understood without difficulty.

Learn the first spins before you attempt the later and more difficult ones. A mastery of the spins described in the first chapter will make the later ones much easier to accomplish.

It is most important that the beginner should take every possible opportunity of watching an expert spin a rope. Five minutes' demonstration is worth half an hour's verbal description, and a few lessons given by personal tuition will be of enormous help.

It should be easily possible to get in touch with some local branch of the Boy Scouts, many of whom would no doubt be very pleased to give practical help in this regard.

By the time this book is published, it will also be possible to hire from the Scouts Head-quarters a demonstration film of Don Potter himself spinning a rope, and showing every kind of spin from the most elementary to the most advanced types. Where considered helpful, the film shows the various

movements in slow motion, thus making it possible and in some cases easy to learn certain phases of rope spinning which are practically impossible to teach in any other way. The film also shows Don Potter using a lariat, and should enable anyone who is interested in this fascinating use of a rope, to learn all the various catches for himself.

The author's special thanks are due to the Head-quarter Staff of the Boy Scouts, who have given him every facility for getting the material together for writing this book, and for making the demonstration film.

Also to Don Potter for the indefatigable way in which he repeatedly demonstrated the various spins and catches, and carefully analysed and amended the written descriptions.

The illustrations to this book have been given by the artist Jock Gaffrons, himself an accomplished performer with a rope.

The photographs were specially taken by Harold White.

D. W. P.

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ROPE SPINNING

ROPE SPINNING

CHAPTER I

The Rope

THE most suitable form of rope is that which is known as "braided." It is made of a large number of strands which are interwoven in exactly the same manner as blind cord.

It can be purchased at all Scout shops, and is sold in several grades. Two different lengths can be obtained, "lariats" of 36 feet in length in two qualities, Grade I and Grade II: and "Spinning Ropes" 21 feet 6 inches long in three grades: Grade No. 1, Grade No. 2, and the "Light Weight."

For the beginner either Grade 1 or Grade 2 of the "Spinning Rope" is advised, as the lighter weight ropes require more exertion and practice to manage them than the heavier types.

The various parts of the rope as described in this book are as follows:

1. The honda.
2. The spoke (or portion of rope held while spinning).
3. End of spoke.
4. The loop (spinning anti-clockwise).

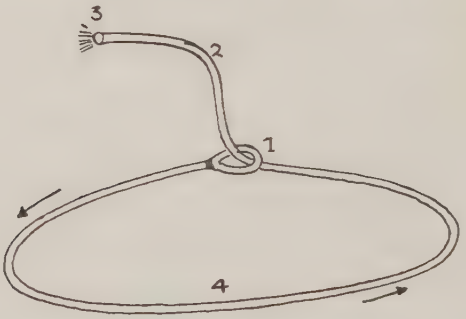


Fig. 1.—The Loop.

1. The honda.
2. The spoke (or portion of rope held while spinning).
3. End of spoke.
4. The loop (spinning anti-clockwise).

The honda usually consists of a metal ring round which the end of the rope is passed and secured. The honda can, however, consist of a simple loop in the rope about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. It should, to give it weight and save wear, be bound with copper wire, equalling in weight the metal ring, see Fig. 2.

A good weight for the wire is from $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce to 1 ounce.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Don Cummings, the American boy roper, only uses a heavy honda for skipping and spinning with a long rope. For all the ordinary spins his honda consists of rope only, covered with a slip of leather which replaces the wire binding shown in Fig. 2. Don Cummings is now giving exhibitions of rope spinning in this country: he has a wonderful command over the loop, and Don Potter has a high opinion of his skill.

Fig. 2.

The loop can be spun in two directions, namely, clockwise and anti-clockwise. Unless specially mentioned to the contrary, however, the various spins described in the following pages are all done in the usual manner, that is anti-clockwise.

To make the matter clear, imagine the loop when spinning to represent the circumference of a clock face, and the spinner to be looking at it along the spoke which he is holding.

Clockwise signifies the direction in which the hands of a clock travel, and anti-clock-

wise the opposite direction. When spinning parallel to and near the ground, the anti-clockwise direction is obviously thus:

Fig. 3.

When spinning vertically thus:

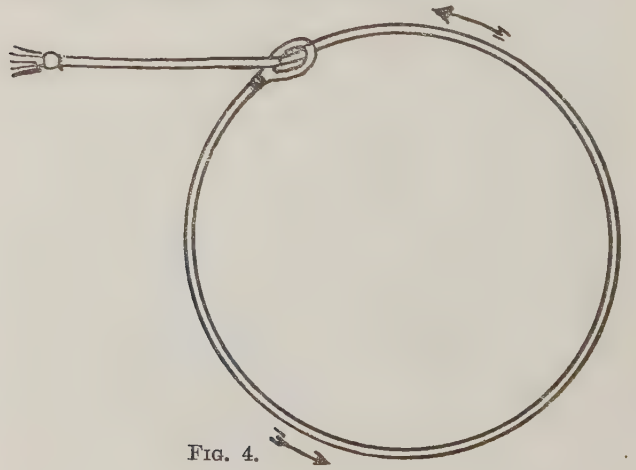


Fig. 4.

In all the following directions the expression clockwise or anti-clockwise has of necessity been described from the spinner's own view of the loop.

The position of the honda will occasionally be described as being at a certain "time o'clock," and this will be found of great assistance in following the details given for the various kinds of spin.

When the loop is vertical, 12 o'clock is obviously the top, 3 o'clock on the right, and 9 o'clock on the left. When horizontal, 12 o'clock is always the point on the loop the farthest advanced in the direction in which the spinner is facing.

The Spin

The loop, when spinning, may be likened to a wooden hoop, supported by a length of string, one end of which is tied to a point on the hoop, and the other held by the hand in the centre of the hoop.

If the hoop now be given a spinning motion in a horizontal plane, and the hand revolved in a similar but smaller circle, the hoop will

naturally continue to revolve so long as the hand actuates the string.

It is exactly in this way that the loop is spun, except that it has to be revolved at such a speed that centrifugal force will maintain it in a circle.

Flat Loop or Peg-Top

This is probably the easiest spin to learn. It is sometimes known as the "Peg-Top," as the loop is kept revolving just above the ground, anywhere near the body, exactly as a peg-top is spun.

Hold the rope exactly as in the illustration opposite.

To spin, extend the right arm horizontally to the right, lean forward slightly, pause and then bring the right hand round in a circle of about 2 feet 6 inches in diameter, at the same time carry the left hand across the body until it is nearly under the right elbow. Now let go of the loop entirely, but retain hold of the spoke in both hands, keep the left hand still at 5 o'clock, whilst the right hand (which must not stop)

Hold Before Starting Flat Spin

follows the track of a narrowing circle thus: the right wrist coming to a stop in the centre of the original imaginary circle, whilst the hand continues moving round and round in an anti-clockwise direction, the spoke being carried round with it, and so causing the loop to be maintained spinning in the air below it, thus:

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Be careful not to *throw* the rope away from you when starting the spin. Extend the right arm as described before beginning the circular movement, pause, and then bring the

hand round in a steady and gradually faster sweep.

All accelerations and decelerations must be done gradually—any sudden change of speed will upset the rhythm of the loop. This is a very important point.

The loop should be spun slowly at first, and speed worked up gradually. If the beginner will say to himself the words " and —*now*, and—*now*, and—*now* " at the ordinary rate of speech, the honda should pass a given point every time the word " *now* " is spoken. Try this, and you will find it of great value when following the directions for jumping into the loop (see page 36), and in many other tricks.

The position of the honda as it revolves should always be borne in mind, and the feeling when spinning a loop should be that of pushing the honda round with the hand.

When the loop can be maintained in an even spin as described above, then try gradually increasing and decreasing the rate of spin.

It will be found that as the loop spins, the spoke must be turned in the hands or it will

kink up and stop the spin. If the loop is going anti-clockwise, then the spoke must be turned in the same direction, and vice versa. The left hand can easily twist the spoke in the required direction. The right hand must also do the same thing whilst spinning the loop, and the knack will soon be acquired.

If kinks form in the spoke, stop, unwind them and start again. The loop will not spin properly if the spoke has kinked, and it is bad for the rope.

When spinning fast, it will soon be discovered that if the spoke be not held too tightly, the spoke will turn itself in the right direction.

Assuming that the above directions have been followed out, you should now be able to spin the Flat Loop anti-clockwise, and vary the rate of spin.

You will find that you can carry the loop about with you, raise it and lower it, and bring it across the front of the body and back again. You will also be able to pivot round in a complete circle both to the right and left, carrying the loop in front of you: do so, at varying rates of turn.

To move the loop round in this way, it is easiest to carry it to the left as the honda goes from 2 o'clock to 10 o'clock (anti-clockwise), and to the right as it passes from 7 o'clock to 4 o'clock (anti-clockwise). In other words it is best to move the loop in the direction in which the honda is moving.

Practise these movements assiduously, as they will give you control of the rope, and at the same time teach you to sense the position of the honda.

Master the preceding directions, and you will have learned the real basis on which all the many different spins and tricks depend.

Flat Loop or Peg-top Clockwise

As already mentioned, the usual direction of spinning is anti-clockwise, but it is interesting to be able to spin the other way, and gives increased command over the rope.

Simply reverse the method of holding, and the direction of spin. Think it out before you try it, and make the necessary motions with the hands without the rope. You will very quickly master the idea.

Left-Handed Spinning

The above, and in fact all spins, can and should also be done with the left hand. Those who are left-handed will prefer to learn with the left hand first. They can easily do so by reversing or adapting the foregoing directions.

Increasing the Loop

To increase the size of the loop gradually, increase the rate of spin, and the loop will slowly extend itself.

Decreasing the Loop

To decrease the size of the loop, slow the speed right down. Lower the hand a few inches, and jerk it up again to its former position, all without pausing in the spin itself. The loop will contract, and the spoke become proportionately longer.

The loop can be enlarged and reduced to a surprising extent with a little practice.

When fully enlarged, the spoke will be so short that the right hand alone holds it at the extreme end of the spoke. When spinning

in this way, the spoke can be changed from left hand to right, and vice versa.

The anti-clockwise spin can also be started with the right hand alone, by holding the end of the spoke, and gripping the loop with the fingers. Allow the rope to hang from the right side thus gripped in the right hand. Bring the right arm round in an anti-clockwise sweep, let go with the fingers and an anti-clockwise spin with the loop fully extended can be commenced.

The same manœuvre can be carried out with a clockwise spin, though this is a trifle more difficult. The right hand must lead the whole rope (honda to the front), first across the body to the left, and then in an outward clockwise sweep.

With a little practice the spin can be started single-handed in either direction. Try to make the honda take the lead, and swing it well round with the spoke; the loop will naturally follow, and then spin.

CHAPTER II

The Crinoline

SOMETIMES called the " Wedding Ring " —one of the prettiest spins to watch. The loop is spun parallel to the ground as in the Flat Loop, but the spinner is inside the loop. The initial problem is, " How to get inside the loop ? " The best answer for the beginner is to start there.

Lay the loop on the floor in a circle of about 5 feet in diameter. Stand in the centre, and hold exactly as for Flat Loop (page 22).

To start the spin turn to the left, raising the hands slightly, and the loop should then " float " in the air about 18 inches above the ground, remaining equi-distant from the body at every point. A turn of 30 degrees to 45 degrees should be sufficient to " float " the loop.

Just before the turn is complete, let go of loop with fingers of both hands, and bring the

right hand diagonally upwards across the face, then round the back of head, raising it gradually. The right hand must continue round in an anti-clockwise circle just above the head, carrying the honda—and so the loop—round with it.

The whole movement should be a gradually increasing sweep until the loop is spinning, when the formula for regulating speed " and —*now* and—*now* " should be employed (see page 24).

After the first upward movement, try to keep the right arm steady in the centre of the loop, the right wrist acting as an universal and flexible joint.

The beginner will find a difficulty in avoiding the loop touching his body, but a little perseverance will overcome this. If the loop touches in front, then the hand has been carried too far behind the head, and vice versa.

Don't jerk—remember that all sudden changes of speed upset the loop.

The knack of starting and maintaining this spin will suddenly come. Keep the body and right arm in the centre of the circle, and try to make the wrist do most of the work. Don't

rush the movements, but keep them slow and smooth and *try to push the honda round with the right forefinger and thumb.* Keep the right wrist flexible.

Most beginners try to start the spin too quickly—this is wrong. Take it leisurely—the loop cannot be rushed into a spin, it must be led.

The loop can be expanded and contracted by increasing and decreasing the speed, at the same time paying out or pulling in the spoke with the left hand. When spinning with the end of spoke in right hand, it can be changed to the left hand, and back again to the right, the spin being continued meantime.

An Alternative Method

Most rope spinners prefer to start the Crinoline with the loop outside the body.

To do this, hold the rope exactly as shown in the frontispiece, the loop being about 5 feet in diameter, and the hands about 30 inches apart.

Raise both hands until each is just below the level of its own shoulder. Now bring the right hand round in an anti-clockwise circle

passing outside the left hand, and continuing round the back of the head until the hand is again opposite the right shoulder. Left hand and arm keep quite still. At this moment the loop should be completely encircling the body and floating in the air about waist high. Now both hands give a slight pull round to the left and then drop the loop, the right hand holding the spoke and continuing its anti-clockwise circle, and coming to a point above the head, where the wrist carries on the spin.

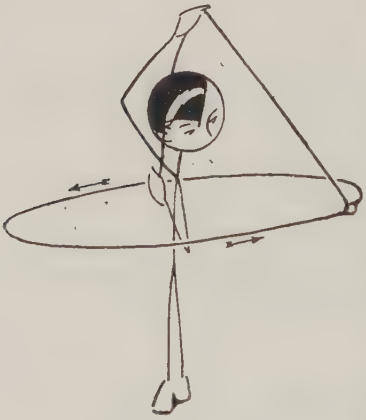


Fig. 7.—The "Crinoline."

Don't jerk—make the whole movement smoothly and firmly, and the effect will be first to drape the loop round the body (though not touching it at any point), and then the right hand can carry the spoke round and start the loop spinning; see Fig. 7.

Crinoline Clockwise

The Crinoline can also be spun clockwise, and for practice and command of the rope it will be found interesting to do so. A little experiment will soon show how the spin can be started: the great point is to "float" the rope round the body before actually starting to spin.

Fig. 8. — The "Hand-round."

The Hand-round

A useful spin and easily learned. The spinner stands in the centre of the loop, which is kept revolving below the waist level, and the end of the spoke is transferred from hand to hand as it comes round.

Hold the rope as for a Crinoline, and stand in centre of loop. The hands, however, below the waist level. Turn to left, "float" the loop and drop exactly as for the Crinoline, but instead of raising the right hand, bring it round to the left hip and transfer the spoke to

the left hand, which should be waiting there to receive it.

The left hand now moves straight round to the centre of the back, keeping close in to the body all the way round.

The right hand must be brought smartly round to the same spot to meet it, and the spoke again transferred to the right hand.

The right hand now comes round close in to the body, and carries the spoke to the front of the body, where the left hand must be waiting to receive it, and again carry it round to the back, and so on.

If the speed of the hands is correct, the loop will spin in a perfect circle about a foot above the floor.

The only small difficulty in learning this spin is to transfer the loop from one hand to the other smoothly and without disturbing the rhythm of the loop, and at the same time keep the hands close in to the body.

To practise this, take a cricket stump or walking-stick, and holding it by one end pass it rapidly round and round the body, changing hands back and front as described above. Each hand should in turn grip the same end

of the stick in exactly the same spot. The stick should point downwards at an angle of 45 degrees to the body. This can be quickly mastered, and as soon as the hands are accustomed to the change of grip the rope will be found easier to transfer than the stick. Keep the hands close in to the body all the way round.

The Hand-Round can also be done clockwise.

Jump Into Flat Loop

Spin a Flat Loop about 5 feet in diameter, and in front of body. Just as the honda passes the body, jump into the centre of the loop. Keep the right hand low as you jump and the loop will pass under the feet.

As you enter the loop carry the right hand across the body and upwards until it is above the head, and you will then find you can continue with a Crinoline.

Jump Out of Crinoline

As the honda passes behind the body, lower the right hand below the head. This will allow the loop to drop nearly to ground

level. As the honda passes the right side, extend the right arm to the right, and jump out of the loop to the left. Continue spinning the Flat Loop on right side.

You can, if you wish, jump into the Flat Loop as above, but instead of raising the right hand and spinning a Crinoline, continue with a Hand-Round. It is also perfectly easy to jump out of the Hand-Round and continue spinning the Flat Loop.

Up to now it is assumed that the loop has been spinning to the speed formula "and—*now*" as described on page 24. But it can be accelerated, and the jumps in and out done with the loop revolving as fast as the wrist can carry it round.

Hand-Round to Crinoline

Spin an anti-clockwise Hand-Round, and then instead of passing spoke to left hand in front raise the right hand, carry it right round the head anti-clockwise and spin the Crinoline.

The same movement can be carried out from a clockwise Hand-Round, ending in a clockwise crinoline by reversing the movements.

THE ROUNDABOUT
(The Loop floating round to the front)

Crinoline to Hand-Round

Spin an anti-clockwise Crinoline and when the honda reaches 3 o'clock, bring the right hand down across the front of the body to the left hip, where the left hand can seize the end of the spoke, and carry on the anti-clockwise Hand-Round.

Round-about

The object of this spin is to carry the loop in a complete circular path round and outside the body, the spinner continuing to face his front.

Spin a Flat Loop on right side of body. Carry it round to left of body. Allow the loop to complete one revolution on left side, and then bring the hand with a slight outward sweep past the left shoulder. This will bring the loop round to the back of the body. The right hand should pass slowly behind the head until it is opposite the right shoulder, and if the movement is timed correctly the loop will go one revolution whilst it is passing round the back. As the loop passes the left shoulder use the full length of the spoke, and

shorten your hold again as the loop comes round the right shoulder.

As soon as the loop reaches the right side again, the whole movement should be repeated.

Practise this until the loop can be carried round and round the body without effort, looking to your front the whole time. It can be assisted by leaning slightly backwards as the loop passes behind.

During its passage round the body, the loop can be made to revolve any number of times, but the most effective-looking number is three or perhaps four turns.

The Round-about can be done round the body in a clockwise direction also, the loop still revolving anti-clockwise. It can also be done round the body in both directions with the loop revolving clockwise.

Practise the first way assiduously, i.e. anti-clockwise round the body with loop also going anti-clockwise, as this makes an excellent start with a series of spins, and can be continually and effectively introduced at various subsequent moments during such a series.

Look to your front all the time, and make

the movements of the right arm and wrist deliberate and graceful.

Merry-go-Round

This is a nice variation of the Hand-round. Instead of the right hand carrying the loop round the body, it is spun below waist level, and transferred from the right hand to the left in front of the body, carried round to the back, and then given back to the right hand, which brings it round to the front again, and so on. The loop, of course, revolving all the time. It can be reversed in exactly the same ways as described above for the Hand-round.

You should now have reached a point where the real art of rope spinning can be applied, namely to perform a series of different spins in immediate succession.

For instance:

Spin a Flat Loop—Jump In.
Crinoline—Jump Out.
Jump In—Hand-round.
Change to Crinoline.
Jump Out—Flat Loop.
Merry-go-Round.
Change to Round-about.

Flat Loop—Jump In—Crinoline.
Change to Left Hand—Back to Right Hand.
Jump Out—Finish.

The above series can be varied in many ways. Keep the body upright, and do not watch the loop. An occasional glance may be advisable, but the less the loop is watched, the more the hands are trained to the feel of the rope and the better the effect from the display point of view.

On the whole a slow loop should predominate, but vary the speed occasionally.

CHAPTER III

The Throw-up or Hoosh

THIS is more of a flourish than a spin, but looks very well, and makes a good finish to a series of spins.

It consists of throwing the loop up above the level of the head, and allowing it to fall again, without interrupting the spin.

It can be done very effectively after jumping into a Peg-Top spin.

Instead of raising the right hand in the usual manner and spinning a Crinoline after the jump in, bring the right hand up with a similar but exaggerated movement, and carry it high up above the head.

The hand should make one turn on the wrist so as to give the loop a continued impetus to spin whilst it is above the head, and then be lowered to the usual position for spinning a Crinoline. The loop will fall below the waist and then rise again to the usual level.

With a little practice, the loop can be made to rise several feet above the head and fall nearly to ground level again, before recovering.

The right hand should travel up with a corkscrew motion: this has the effect of raising the loop whilst keeping it spinning at the same time.

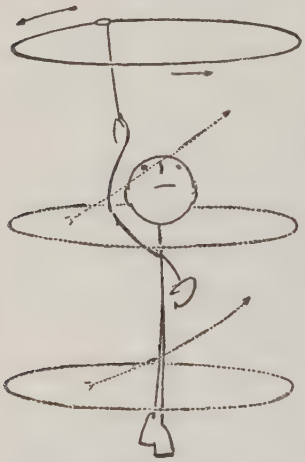
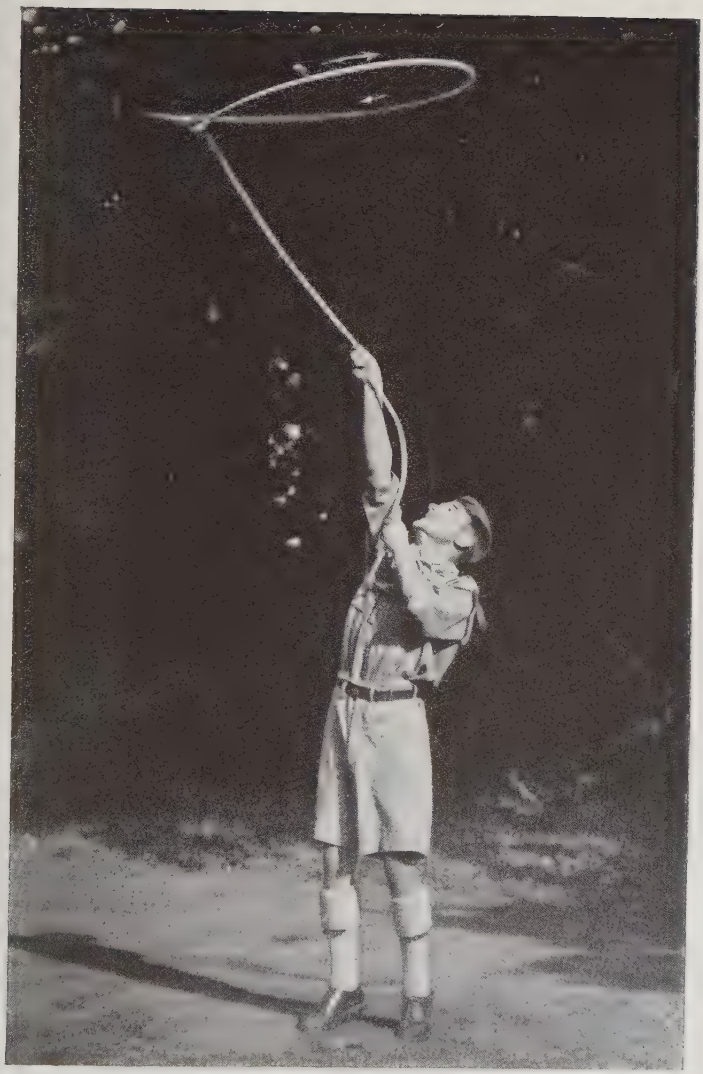


Fig. 9.—The "Hoosh."

After hooshing the loop up above the head, it can be allowed to drop of its own accord, and as soon as it reaches the ground level the right hand carries it to the right, and the Jump Out can be made. This is a very graceful and effective way of jumping out of the loop. The effect is that the loop descends, and without any pause passes under the spinner's feet to the right, where a Flat Loop is continued.

It will take a little steady practice to prevent the loop touching the body. Remember the advice already given in this regard,



The Hoosh

namely, if the loop touches the body in front the right hand has moved too far back in its circular path, and vice versa. The same principle applies, of course, should the loop touch either side of the body.

A spectacular finish to a Crinoline spin may be made by hooshing the loop with a pronounced movement, and slightly out of the vertically upward path, and then letting go of the spoke entirely.

The whole rope will rise high in the air, then fall clear of the spinner, the loop gradually breaking up as it falls.

The Lift On

This can be done in two ways. The Lift On to the body, and the Lift On to the spinning arm.

The Lift On to the body is accomplished by spinning a Flat Loop, and then raising the loop up and back on to the head until it encircles the body, when a Crinoline spin is continued.

It introduces a new function of the spoke which must be understood before it can be properly applied to this and other moves.

Imagine a Flat Loop being spun about 1 foot above the ground. If the loop were now raised directly upwards, say 5 feet into the air, it would strike against the spinning arm and so destroy the spin. But if, as the loop rose in the air, the right hand carried the spoke outside the loop, it could, when the loop had risen sufficiently high, reach inside the loop again, and continue to spin it from inside.

For this reason it will be described as the "pivot effect" of the spoke, and it will be used in other movements such as the Butterfly, Zigzag, and Ocean Wave, as explained in later chapters of this book.

Lift on to Body

Spin a Flat Loop on the right side of the body and about 4 feet 6 inches in diameter. Wait until it has settled down into a steady rhythm, and follow the path of the honda very carefully. As the honda reaches 6 o'clock, lean forward, and as the honda passes from 4 o'clock to 12 o'clock (anti-clockwise) raise the right arm with a decided movement first up and then to the left, until the right

hand is just above and in front of the forehead. This will bring the spoke outside the loop, and the loop to a position immediately above the right hand, the honda being now at about 6 o'clock. The right elbow should now be bent smartly until the right hand is level with and a few inches in front of the forehead, and the right hand perform a quick anti-clockwise circle on the wrist. This will bring the loop down and over the body, while the quick wrist movement will keep the loop spinning.

The above description may seem a little complicated, but in brief, all that happens is that the loop is moved up and to the left, the pivot effect of the spoke being used to get it outside the loop, and back inside again before the loop begins to move downwards over the head.

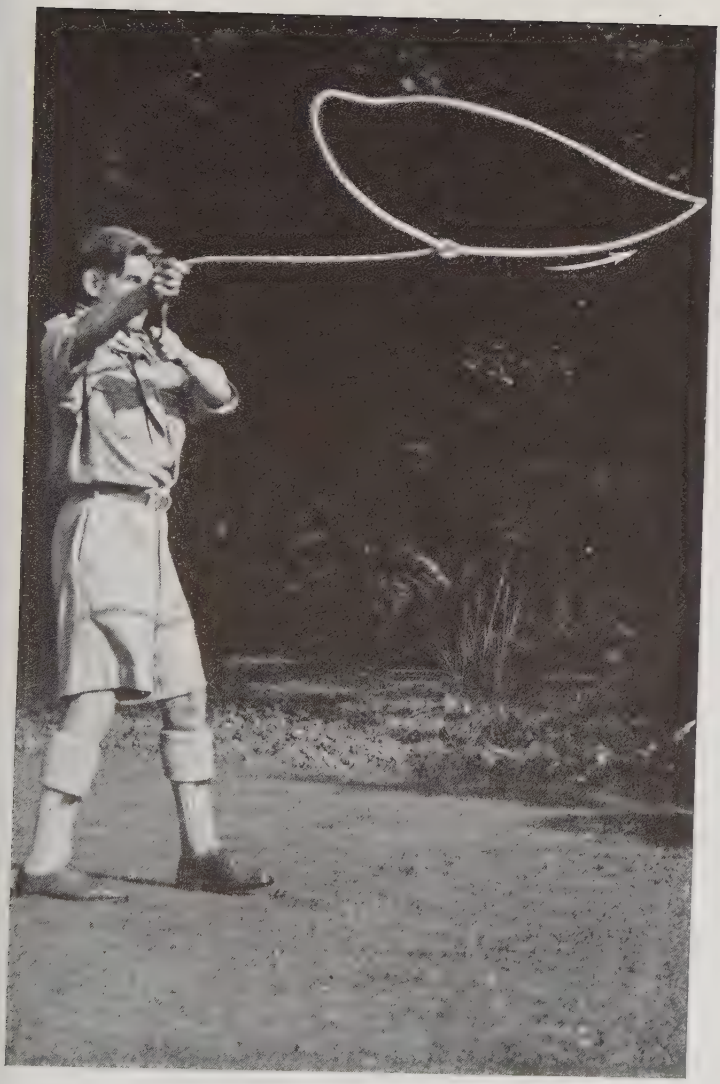
Try to keep the exact position of the honda in mind, and make the whole movement smooth but very decided. Don't drag the loop upwards, swing it up, the hand and arm moving at just about the same speed as the honda was travelling round when the lift was begun.

Practise lifting the loop up and to a position just above the head before attempting to bring it down and round the body. As soon as you can do this accurately, you will easily be able to continue with the Crinoline. Do not be discouraged by your first failures. Do not spin the initial Flat Loop too fast, and remember that from the time the loop begins to lift (the honda being at about 4 o'clock) until it is in the air over the head with the spoke below it, the loop should have only made one revolution.

After a few carefully timed efforts, you will probably receive a pleasant surprise by finding yourself spinning a steady Crinoline, after having done a successful Lift On.

Do not exaggerate any of the movements, the whole thing can be done with surprisingly little effort; it is nearly all a question of timing. Once you have got the hand and arm movements right, try it at varying rates of speed, and you will suddenly get it.

The following diagrams show the positions of the loop being raised until it is spinning above the head, and just before descending round the body.



The Lift On
(Loop just about to descend round the spinner)

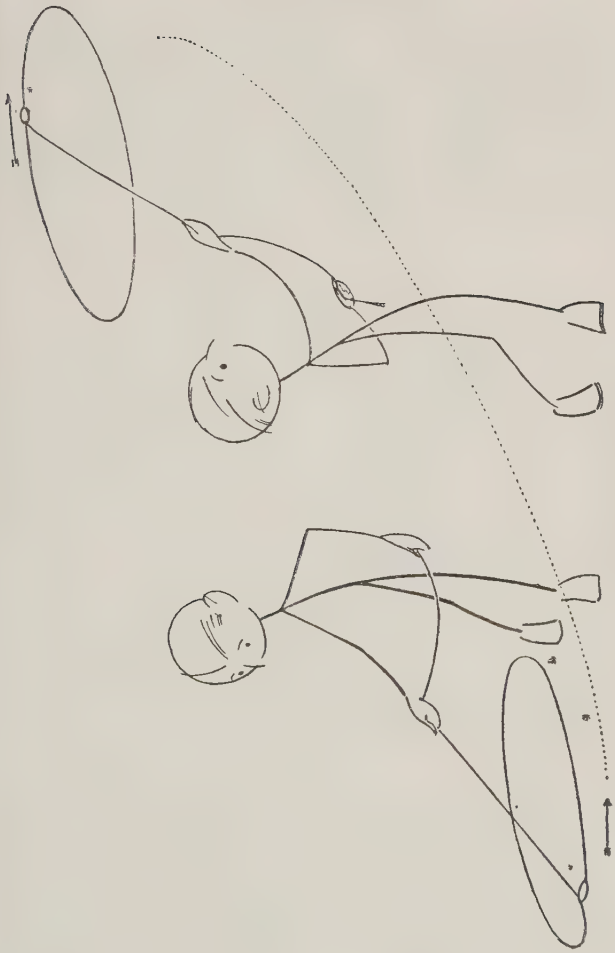


FIG. 10.—The "Lift on."

Lift On to Arm

The Lift On can also be done on to the spinning arm. The effect is that the Flat Loop is raised up just as in the Lift On to the body, but instead of a Crinoline being

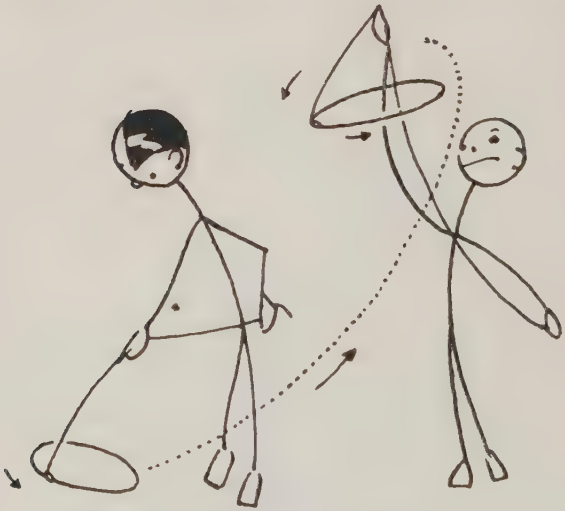


Fig. 11.—"Lift-on to the Arm."

spun round the body, it is spun round the right arm, which is held vertically upwards.

Use a smaller Flat Loop, say one 2 feet 6 inches in diameter, and spin it in front of the body. Using the same rhythm as when lifting on to the body, raise the loop vertically

upwards, draw the spoke out and thrust it smartly in again from under the loop, and spin a small Crinoline round the upraised right arm.

By suddenly lowering the right arm again, the spoke can be withdrawn, the loop allowed to fall, and then the original small Flat Loop can be continued.

Lift Off the Body

To lift the loop off the body from a Crinoline, manipulate it exactly as for the Hoosh while spinning a Crinoline (page 41), except that instead of raising the right hand directly upwards, carry it to the right. This will throw the loop clear of the body. The loop will then drop below the level of the hand; as it is doing so draw the spoke out, and when the loop is low enough, push the spoke in again from above, and continue a Flat Loop.

Practise lifting the loop on and off the body without any pause for intermediate spinning. Also practise lifting the loop on to the body, allow it to drop straight to the ground, and then jump out to the left, spin a few turns of an ordinary Flat Loop and then repeat.

Sun-fishing

This is one of the most graceful moves with the loop. The effect is rather like that of the "Lift On," except that the loop, instead of being brought up and over to encircle the body, is carried right over the top of the head, and down to the opposite side, where a flat spin is continued.

Do an ordinary flat spin on the right side of the body. Bring it round in front, and then to the left side. The loop is spinning anti-clockwise. Now, as the honda goes from six to twelve o'clock, raise the right hand vertically upwards. Use the pivot effect of the spoke (page 44), and the loop will be revolving on the left side, above the level of the head. Carry the right hand across the top of the head over to the right side, and this will cause the loop to travel across to the right side also. Now drop the right hand, again use the pivot effect of the spoke, and allow the loop to drop. As soon as it has fallen below the level of the waist, carry on a flat spin once more.

The whole movement of the right arm

and hand is done in one continuous sweep, up—over the head to the right—and down. The loop will perform one complete revolution as it passes above the head, and another one as it falls on the right side.

As soon as the flat spin on the right side has begun, the loop can be carried round the front to the left again, and the manœuvre repeated.

The Bounce

This looks more difficult than it is, though it will need some practice before the loop can be made to " bounce " to its full limit up and down. Spin a Crinoline, and then give a series of Hooshes, each one carrying the loop a little higher, and allowing the loop to go one revolution while above the head. As the movement gets more pronounced, you will need to pull the loop down, and give a powerful hoosh up again. Use a loop of about 4 feet 6 inches to 5 feet, and as soon as you get the rhythm, you will be able to bounce the loop from floor level to about 8 feet in the air. It is very effective to start the bounce slowly, and then work it up to a very fast movement.

Series of Spins

You should now practise a series of spins, bringing in all the variations mentioned up to this point, and without stopping the loop.

CHAPTER IV

Vertical Spins

WE now come to another phase of rope spinning, namely that of controlling vertical loops. The Flat Loops should all be spun parallel to the ground, and the force of gravity is therefore exercising the same downward pull on every part of the loop simultaneously. In the case of a Vertical Loop, gravity is retarding that part which is moving upwards, and accelerating that which is moving downwards.

As soon as you try to spin a Vertical Loop, you will feel the different wrist action which is needed, and the correct movement will come with practice. The wrist action should be a little firmer, and the wrist move in a slightly larger circle. A little more "lift" can be applied to the up stroke, but with no jerk.

Small Vertical Loop

Should be spun both clockwise and anti-clockwise. The effect is that of a Flat Loop spinning in a vertical plane. For this reason they are sometimes known as Cartwheels, which is self-explanatory.

Hold the rope just as for a Flat Loop, raise the hands, and bring them round in a vertical circle in the air. As soon as the loop is "floating" in the correct position in the air, let go just as in the directions for a Flat Loop, and spin.

Another method of learning this spin, is to start a Flat Loop, and gradually bring the wrist upwards, carrying the loop with it. As the loop gradually assumes a vertical position, you will feel the difference in wrist action which is required, and the slight "lift" on the upward stroke which is necessary.

This loop can be expanded in much the same way as the Crinoline (see page 29), and of course the spoke must be allowed to twist in the hands.

Vertical Loop anti-clockwise

This should not need much explanation. Hold as for anti-clockwise Flat Loop about

3 feet in diameter, the balance of the spoke hanging by the left side. Bring the right hand over anti-clockwise, the two hands reversing their movements from those required for the clockwise Cart Wheel.

The Raise On

Spin a Vertical Loop, and then gradually raise the arm until the loop is spinning

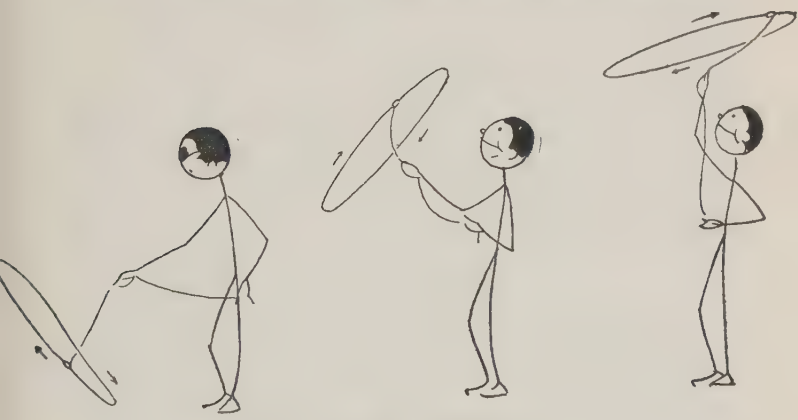


Fig. 12.—The "Raise-on."

horizontally above the head. Here again as the loop assumes the horizontal, you will feel the necessity of "lift" and the difference in wrist action. There is a tendency as the loop becomes horizontal, not to bring the hand

far enough back in its turning movement; be careful to do this, as it spreads the loop out, and the Crinoline can then be spun.

Raise On to Arm

Use a 2 feet 6 inch Vertical Loop, and gradually raise the right arm until the loop is revolving round the spinning arm, just as after the Lift On to the arm.

Raise Off

The loop can be raised off the body and off the arm by bringing the wrist and arm slowly back to the original position.

The Butterfly

A very pretty spin. The effect is that of carrying a Vertical Loop about 2 feet 6 inches in diameter across in front of the body from one side to the other and back again without interrupting the spin. The loop instead of being spun parallel to the shoulders, is at right angles to them, consequently to carry it from one side to the other, the pivot effect of the spoke, mentioned on page 44, must be used.

BUTTERFLY
(Loop on left side)

In a true Butterfly, the loop does two revolutions on each side of the body.

Spin a 2 feet 6 inch Vertical Loop opposite the left shoulder. The plane of the loop must be at right angles to the line of the shoulders, and the spin clockwise. To do this it will be necessary to turn the body slightly to the left.

As the honda reaches 6 o'clock draw the right hand upwards and across the body to the right. This will pull the loop across to the right side, the spoke coming out of the loop as it passes. The right hand should now spin two anti-clockwise circles of the loop opposite the right shoulder, and again as the honda reaches 6 o'clock, the right hand should draw the loop back again across the body to the left side, and repeat.

The wrist must be kept very flexible, and in fact do most of the work.

Actually the loop does one and a half circles on each side of the body, and crosses during the final half circle.

The right hand performs a sort of figure 8 in front of the body, travelling twice round each circle of the eight as the loop revolves. Emphasis should be made on the first circle after

each change of position, and the spinner may find it helpful to count "*One*—two,—and *one*—two,—and," etc. The word "*One*" covers the first and emphasised revolution of the loop, and should be said as the honda is at 6 o'clock.

The word "two" is also said when the honda is at 6 o'clock on the second revolution,

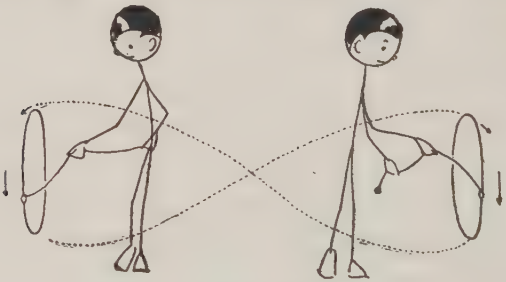


Fig. 13.—The "Butterfly."

and the word "and" as the hand is drawing the loop across the front of the body.

The Butterfly can, with a little practice, best be started by holding the rope as for the start of a Flat Loop. Then bring the right hand up and over the left, away from the body and then downwards. This will "float" and start a clockwise Vertical Loop opposite the left shoulder. In other words the loop has

been made to do the final turn which it makes in coming across from the right side to the left in a Butterfly spin. If the body is swayed to the left whilst these movements are being carried out, the exact effect will be attained.

The Butterfly can also be spun backwards and forwards on the right and left sides, two turns being made in front, and two behind the body.

To do this, start a clockwise Vertical Loop of the ordinary kind (that is parallel to the shoulders) in front of the right shoulder. The timing and movement will be the same as for the original Butterfly described, but the right hand draws the loop backwards in this case, and the loop travels from front to rear past the right side. In the same way it is drawn forwards again.

The same thing can be done backwards and forwards on the left side of the body.

By combining the movements, the loop can be pulled back on the right side, brought forwards to the front centre of the body, and then drawn back past the left side, and so on. Its line of travel thus forms an arrow-head ;

in fact this manœuvre is known as the "Arrow-Head."

The spinner will soon discover that all the Butterfly spins can be reversed, and he should practise until he is able to do them both ways.

One good way of learning a reverse is to

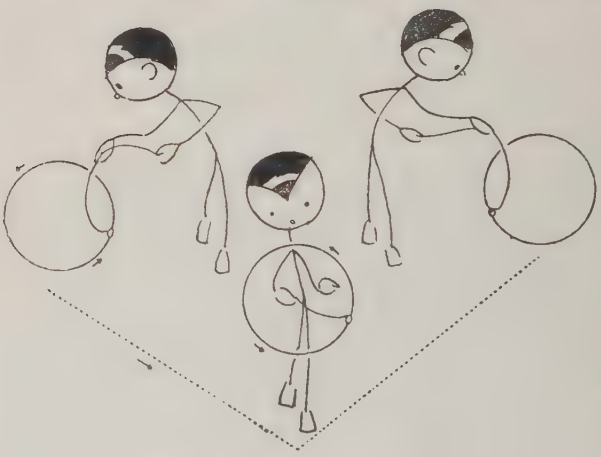


Fig. 14.—The "Arrow-head."

spin the first Butterfly described, i.e. starting with a clockwise spin on the left side, and carrying the loop across the front of the body to the right, and back again. Now, when the loop is spinning on the left side, make a complete left-about turn, and you will find yourself spinning a *clockwise spin* on your *right*

Butterfly
(Loop on right side)

side, thus forming the start of a reversed Butterfly across the front of the body.

Remember that the expressions clockwise and anti-clockwise are stated as from the spinner's point of view; actually the loop continues to spin without interruption. For instance, if a Vertical Loop is spinning clockwise opposite the left shoulder, and you do a left-about turn, the loop is then spinning anti-clockwise opposite the right shoulder; that is, in each case *from the spinner's point of view.*

The Butterfly loop can also be carried across the back instead of the front of the body, both from right to left and vice versa. As soon as it arrives on the right or left side after its passage across the back, it should be carried across the front of the body and then round the back again, and so on. The effect is that the loop is carried completely round the body, still making the two turns at each side, as in the original Butterfly described.

The Rolling Butterfly

A nice variation of the ordinary Butterfly which is spun to and fro in front of the body.

In order to do it, instead of pulling the loop straight across the body from right to left and vice versa, give it an upward pull as well. If the right hand be raised to the level of the face and then dropped again as it pulls the loop across, the loop will follow it, and perform a graceful figure of eight in front of the body.

The Zigzag

This is simply a Butterfly, but only one turn is made instead of two. The effect therefore is that of a Vertical Loop being spun exactly in front of the body, and at right angles to it, the hand moving over the top from side to side after each turn.

Fig. 15.—The "Zig-zag."

The hand spins it first on the right side of the loop for one turn. The spoke is then carried out and over the top as the honda reaches its highest point, and the hand then spins it from the left side of the loop for one more complete turn. Again as the honda reaches its highest

point, the spoke is carried over the top of the loop from left to right and the movement repeated.

Spin it like the Butterfly at first—but with one turn each side, and gradually you will be able to cease carrying the loop across from one side to the other in front of the body until it remains spinning directly in front. It is then the hand which moves across to either side of the loop and keeps it spinning.

It can be spun reversed, and in this case start it from a reversed Butterfly.

Roll Overs

These require a great deal of practice. Instead of the loop being spun from its centre by the action of the hand, as the honda rises the spinning hand gives an upward and circular jerk. The result of this when properly done is that the loop progresses through the air exactly like a wheel rolling along on a fixed surface; it can be made to do at least one full turn in this manner. In practice a loop of about 2 feet 9 inches is used, and when spinning clockwise it is brought to the left side, given the requisite impetus, and can

then be made to roll across the shoulders, over the face, over one or both arms and in many other directions. A correct Roll Over is done very slowly, and the effect of seeing the loop suddenly roll along of itself, exactly like a wheel with invisible spokes, is very striking.

In theory a Roll Over can be done from an ordinary Cartwheel, but in practice the rhythm of a Butterfly spin renders it easier.

Roll Over the Arms

Spin a Butterfly about 2 feet 9 inches in diameter to and fro opposite the right shoulder. As you bring the loop from the back to the front, carry it across to the left so that by the time it has done its two complete turns, it is about waist high and opposite the left shoulder.

At this moment the loop has done two clockwise turns and is still moving to the left. Allow it to do one more half turn, and then as the honda passes 6 o'clock, give the right hand a slight dip, and bring it smartly up again about 1 foot. Extend the left arm straight out in front of the body, whilst the right hand carries the end of the spoke beyond

Roll Over the Arms

and clear of the left hand. The impetus given by the right hand causes the loop to roll slowly over both arms, the loop passing across close to the face, and the spoke remains on the far side of it. As soon as the loop has rolled off the right arm, the right hand is drawn back again and the spin continued.

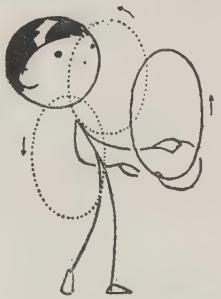


Fig. 16.—"Roll" over the Arms.

This feat requires a great deal of practice. Try to make the loop roll slowly along in the air at first, and as soon as you can do this, endeavour to control its direction. Finally you can interpose both arms as it rolls, and it will pass over them as described above.

Roll Over the Shoulders

The procedure is exactly the same as above, except that the head is bent forward, and the loop is rolled across the shoulders, the spin being resumed when it has come down on the right side.

In the same way the loop can be made to roll over the face, and even the spoke itself.

It can also be rolled over the left thigh. In this case the left leg is stretched outwards and the loop carried under it, the impetus being given whilst it is actually below the leg. The

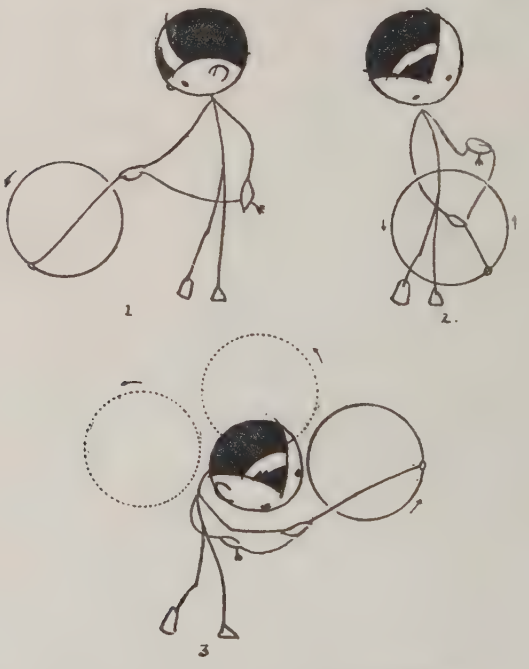


Fig. 17.—"Roll" over the Shoulders.

right hand must then reach under the leg and throw the spoke over it from left to right, catching it again after it has passed over the top of the thigh.

Roll Over the Shoulders

By starting a backwards and forwards Butterfly on the left side, the loop can be carried across to the right in front of the body—spinning anti-clockwise—and then made to roll from right to left over the right arm.

In fact, once the initial impetus to make the

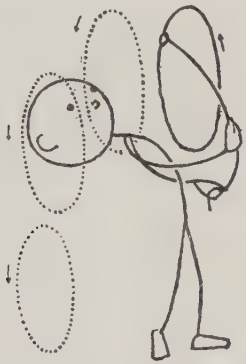


FIG. 18.—"Roll" over the Chest.

loop roll has been acquired, many different Roll Overs can obviously be done, but those described above are the most common, and quite sufficiently difficult to do neatly.

CHAPTER V

Ocean Wave

DON POTTER professes a particular affection for this spin, and it certainly is one of the most effective.

It will be remembered that in the case of the Butterfly, directions were given for carrying the loop from right to left, then back across the rear of the body to the right again. In that case the Butterfly was started on the right side with an anti-clockwise loop.

In the case of an Ocean Wave, a Clockwise Butterfly is started on the right side, with a loop about 5 feet 6 inches in diameter, carried across to the left side and to the rear of the left shoulder (becoming an anti-clockwise loop from the spinner's point of view); at this moment the right hand carries the spoke over the head and then gives the loop a strong pull across the back to the right side, when the whole movement is repeated. The loop is

spinning about twice as fast as in the case of the Butterfly, and its passage across the body is also about double the speed.

Beginners may find it a good plan to start the ordinary Butterfly, i.e. clockwise on the left side, carry it to the right, and then back to the left again. Then do a left-about turn,

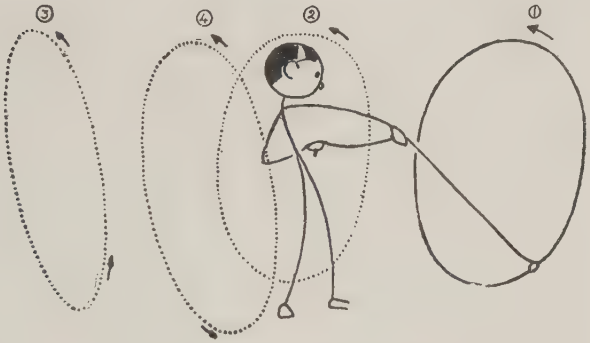


Fig. 19.—The "Ocean Wave."

which will mean that the loop is now revolving clockwise on the right side; this is, in fact, the real start of the Ocean Wave, and it can be carried on from that point.

Remember that the Ocean Wave is really a reversed Butterfly carried round the body, though it is done much faster; and the pull on the loop to bring it across the body is

done in just the same way, that is when the honda is at about 6 o'clock.

The loop in an Ocean Wave can be of any size, though it is best to start with one about 5 feet.

A nice variation can be introduced by using

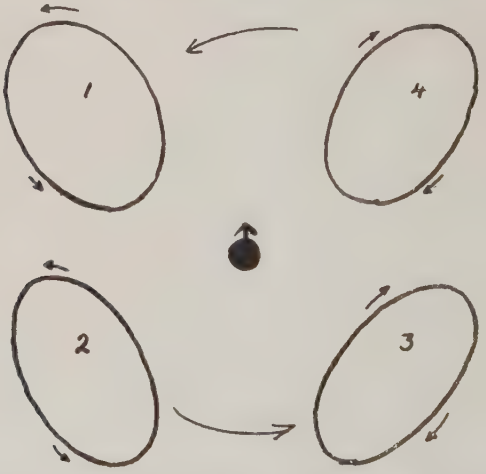


Fig. 20.—Path of Loop round Spinner in the "Ocean Wave."

a loop about 5 feet 6 inches in size, and instead of drawing it backwards across the body, skip through it as you pull the loop from left to right, and then bring it back to the left across the front of the body.

Roll Over Back of Arm

Skipping

The various skips with the loop are very pretty to watch; at the same time they are good, and in some cases hard exercise.

Use a rope about 25 feet long for preference, and a honda weighing about 2 to 2½ ounces.

The best way to start is to spin an anti-clockwise Hand-Round and instead of passing the spoke to the left hand, extend the right arm keeping the right hand as low as possible, and when the spoke comes opposite the legs, jump over it. The right hand must keep the loop spinning a few inches above the ground, and the jump repeated every time the spoke comes round.

The skip can be done off both feet as above, or off one foot. By skipping off each foot alternately the spinner can run along the ground, carrying the loop with him, the spoke passing under the foot just as it leaves the ground.

The skip can of course be started by spinning a Flat Loop, and then jumping in, the skip being continued thereafter.

The same procedure can be carried out with the loop revolving clockwise.

Skipping Through Vertical Loop

This is very strenuous exercise, and is undoubtedly the most exciting and spectacular stunt. A 25-foot rope with 2 to 2½ ounce honda should be used. The loop can be started in either direction.

Suppose a beginning is made by spinning a clockwise Vertical Loop on the right side. Expand it until it is about 6 feet in diameter. When the honda is between 6 and 8 o'clock, draw the right hand smartly across the chest from right to left and at the same time jump off the ground, and bend the head slightly forward. You will now have skipped through the loop and the right hand must carry on an anti-clockwise Vertical Loop on the left side.

Allow the loop to perform one revolution, and as the honda reaches 4 o'clock on its second revolution, draw the right hand back across the chest, jump through the loop again, and repeat the movement.

As soon as you have mastered this skip,

Skipping

the jump through can be done on each revolution of the loop.

The skip can be done by starting the loop

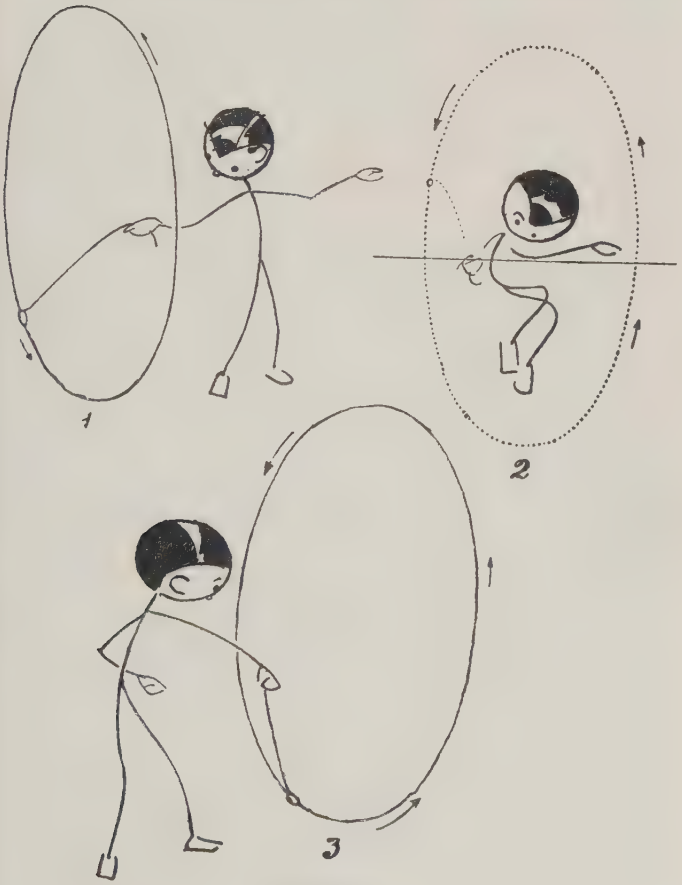


Fig. 21.

from either side with the loop revolving in either direction. The most important point is to *draw the hand straight across the chest* after the honda has passed the feet.

It is usual whilst doing this skip, to remain facing the same direction. It is, however, possible to turn round whilst the loop is passing from right to left and vice versa.

The Lasso Hold

The lasso hold of the rope is worth learning, not only because it is necessary for all lasso work, but because it is a useful way of starting a series of spins.

Hold the rope as described for starting an anti-clockwise Flat Loop or Peg-Top, except that the left hand holds the end of the spoke (and also the surplus coils of rope in the case of a lariat) whilst the right hand grips *both the loop and the spoke* at a point about 18 inches from the honda.

Now swing the right arm round the head in an anti-clockwise direction, turning the thumb downwards whilst the hand is in front; as the hand passes behind the head give the wrist a slow anti-clockwise turn until

Skipping Through Vertical Spin
(Loop can be spun clockwise or anti-clockwise)

the knuckles are below and keep it in that position until the hand has passed the right shoulder; then slowly turn the hand back again until the thumb is below once more.

The effect of this will be to swing the loop round the head, at the same time keeping it distended.

To start a spin from this swing, let go of the loop with the right hand as it passes the right shoulder from back to front, but retain hold of the spoke. If the loop has been kept distended, it will drop straight into a Flat Loop by the right side.

Instead of dropping the loop as above, it can be thrown into the air above the head, and lifted on to the body, when a Crinoline can be spun.

The loop can also be carried round to a point in front of the left shoulder, and a Butterfly be started with an anti-clockwise Vertical Loop on the left side.

The loop should be kept revolving round the head as above until the roper is ready to start a spin, or throw the loop for catching, taking care that it is kept distended and as nearly in a perfect circle as possible.

Suggestions for Display Work

The best display that can be given with a spinning rope is to do a series of different spins without stopping the loop. The spinner can easily work these out for himself, but the following changes will be found useful.

Make the Lift On direct from the Round-About. As soon as the loop has passed round the back and is spinning on the right side, lift it straight on to the body for a Crinoline.

Jump In and Lift Off combined. Jump into a Flat Loop and lift straight off the body.

Jump In and Bounce. Jump into a Flat Loop and start a Bounce straight away.

Lift On and Jump Out. This can be done without any pause for intermediate spinning.

Lift On and Lift Off again without any pause for intermediate spinning.

Every spin can be done in series with the same rope, except the Jump Through a Vertical Loop, which is more easily performed with a 25-foot rope with heavy honda.

Change Hands

The spoke can be changed from the right hand to left hand and back again whilst

spinning. A certain amount of spinning done with the left hand is an effective relief both from the spinner's and spectators' point of view.

Two Ropes

Two ropes can be spun simultaneously, one in each hand, and it is possible to spin a Crinoline with one hand, whilst skipping in a loop spun with the other.

Two Persons Inside Loop

With a long spinning rope, it is possible for a second person to enter the Crinoline from the back, and Don Potter gets someone to do this, and mounts on their shoulders without interrupting the spin.

When skipping through a large Vertical Loop, it is very effective for a second person to run in, and skip behind the spinner.

A fine effect can be obtained by spinning a Crinoline with a 40 or even 70 foot rope, furnished with a heavy honda. It is very strenuous exercise, but the enormous loop which results looks very well indeed.

Decorating the Loop

The loop can be decorated with short streamers of coloured silk, placed at intervals

along its circumference. Another good stunt is to fix one or two small electric bulbs to the loop, and connect them to a battery held in the left hand, the wire being led down the spoke. This looks exceedingly well in a darkened room.

When giving a display of rope spinning, it is a good plan to have a musical accompaniment. Also the performer should endeavour to give the impression that he is enjoying it as much as the audience ought to be.

Whilst learning to spin a rope, and during rehearsals, one is apt to assume a severely concentrated look, but this should be abandoned the moment a real display is given. If the spinner looks cheerful and happy when at work, the audience will certainly enjoy watching him. The point is important, and applies to a good many other things besides rope spinning, and to everything where there is an audience or spectators.

Incidentally, the best setting for a display of rope spinning is a completely black background. This ensures a perfect view of the rope and the performer's movements.

CHAPTER VI

Rope-Spinning Games

Rope v. Rope

QUITE a good game can be played by two spinners each endeavouring to keep their loop spinning the longest time. There are no rules; each may chase the other and try to stop his loop spinning by touching it with his body, arm or foot, or even with his own loop. It is quite easy to run whilst spinning a Crinoline, for instance, and when the enemy approaches, a quick Lift Off can be done, and his loop stopped by a kick with the left foot. Each player must invent his own defence and attack. It can, of course, be played by more than two players.

Racing

Competitors can run an ordinary foot race in the usual conditions, but each spinning a Crinoline during the whole course.

Spin on Bicycle

It is quite amusing to spin a Crinoline whilst riding a bicycle, and a Flat Loop can also be spun in this way.

A race on bicycles with competitors all spinning a Crinoline is quite good fun.

General Hints

To Condition a New Rope

A new rope is stiff and difficult to work with. It may be very quickly improved by attaching one end of it to a fixed point, and pulling hard on the other. It will be found to stretch considerably. This stretching process should be frequently gone through, and even when a rope has been thoroughly worked in and has become pliant, it is a very good thing to give it an occasional stretch.

A tug-of-war is an excellent method of pulling the rope out.

Another good thing is to take the rope inch by inch and knead it and bend it about between the fingers. This loosens the fibres and much improves its pliancy.

Never leave any kinks in a rope. Fold it

up into a coil about a foot in diameter after use. Otherwise leave it stretched straight out on a dry floor.

When you find a rope that suits you, and one that you can work with, look after it and keep it in condition. It is surprising how different lengths of rope vary, and how they repay any proper care that is taken of them.

If the rope develops kinks as you spin it, do not push them out with your foot. This both dirties and spoils the rope for spinning and catching. Unwind the kinks and start again.

A good roper treats his rope fairly and looks after it properly. Partly because he knows it pays him to do so, and partly because he becomes fond of his ropes.

To Clean the Rope

Nothing feels or looks worse than a dirty rope. It can be very easily cleaned by washing it in Lux, or some similar preparation. If very soiled it can be soaked in Lux, and then hung up and scrubbed with a stiff brush. Then soak in changes of clean water and hang out to dry. When dry, give it a good stretching as detailed above.

As a quick expedient, it can be rubbed with chalk, but this is not so effective or lasting as washing.

You can, if you like, sponge the rope over with a weak solution of Blanco, or other whitening compound. It will then dry beautifully white.

A small leather washer may be fitted on the end of the spoke inside the knot. This is useful for beginners, as the spoke can be held quite loosely and so allowed to revolve, whilst the washer bears against the little finger, and prevents the spoke slipping out of the hand. The outside diameter of the washer should be one-fourth of an inch larger than that of the rope itself, and it should fit loosely enough to allow the rope to turn inside it.

Keep a loose flexible wrist for all spins; this not only looks best but gives greater control of the loop.

Try and feel the beat of the honda as it revolves. Try closing the eyes when spinning, and so rely on the feel of the loop as it revolves.

In jumping in and out of the rope, do it lightly and gracefully ; if the loop is managed properly it is only necessary to clear it by a couple of inches. In fact it is quite possible to *step* in and out of a Flat Loop.

Practise spinning on a polished floor if possible. The beginner will find that the loop will not check when it touches the floor and at the same time it will be steadied and straightened out when it does so.

Try to do all the spins as slowly as possible and move the hand and wrist in curves ; any jerk or abrupt change of direction will upset the rhythm of the loop.

Remember that the loop will move freely about in the plane in which it is being spun, but strongly resists being moved into a different plane. For instance a Flat Loop can only be brought gradually into a vertical plane. The action of a loop is gyroscopic, and the loop when spinning may be likened to the solid wheel of a gyroscopic top. A small top of this kind can be bought at any

toy shop, and if it be held in the hand when spinning, it will be found that it can be moved freely up and down and sideways in the plane in which the wheel is revolving, but strongly resists any attempt to twist it into a new plane.

In just the same way a horizontal spinning loop can be thrown vertically up and down, and led sideways, but strongly opposes any effort to turn it into a vertical plane; and vice versa.

Any such change must be done gradually.

Perhaps the best advice that can be given to the beginner is to take the various spins in the order described in this book, and learn them one at a time. Great care has been exercised as to the order in which the spins have been described, and if the early spins are mastered one by one, the later ones will be learned the more easily.

Finally, practise, practise and practise again. But as soon as you feel tired, stop at once or change the type of spin you are trying

to do. If you flog away too long at a spin you find difficult, you will soon get stale. Give it a rest when necessary, and when you start again, you may get it right away.

Think out new variations for yourself; there are doubtless new types of spin to be discovered.

Do not be content just to be able to do the various spins; try to do them easily and neatly.

Rope Spinning is an art, and when done properly is a thing of grace and beauty.

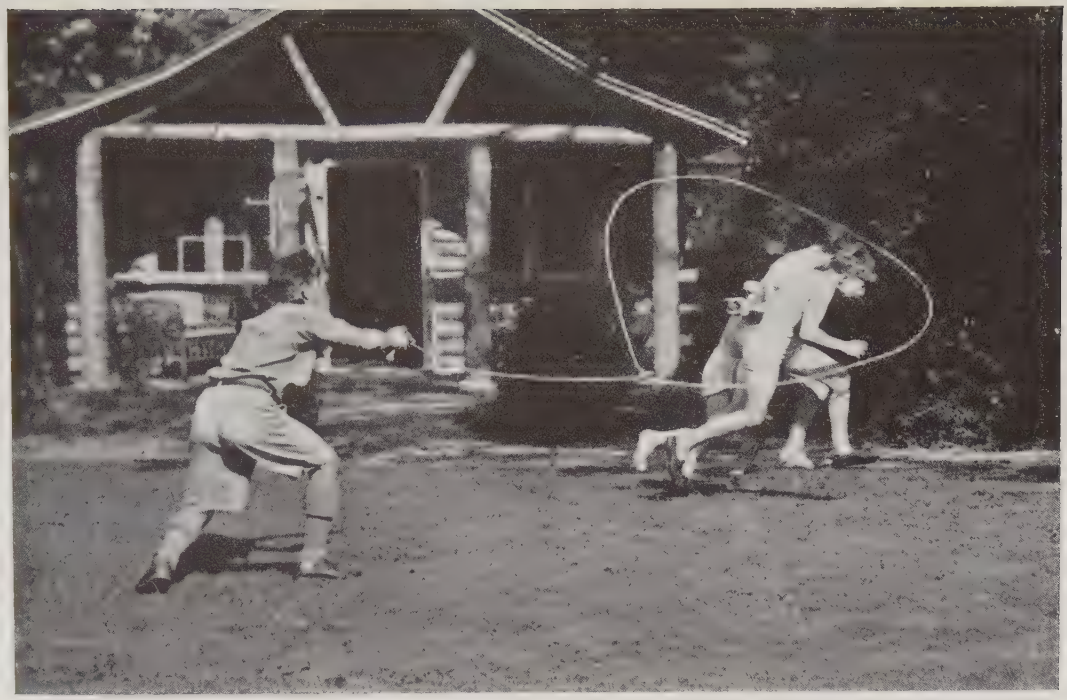
CHAPTER VII

Lassoing

THE use of a rope with a noose in it as a weapon of offence undoubtedly dates from remote antiquity. Primitive man must have got the idea from either seeing animals entangled in the tendrils of thick undergrowths, or through having realised how he himself could be caught in their meshes.

From this it would be a very short step to his setting traps with a noose to catch his prey, and as soon as he was able to fashion and use ropes of vegetable growths, and then of hair and hides, it would not be long before he would employ them for binding his captures.

The use of some kind of lariat must date from times so far distant that there can be no records dealing with it. It had certainly evolved into a definite weapon in early Egyptian times, and has been used all over



Loop Making a Catch

the world in some form or other since man learned to make a rope.

It is not surprising that the lariat has evolved into something that is to-day of the utmost use to mankind. As a weapon of offence it is silent, deadly and practical. It is light to carry, easy to repair and replace, and, above all, difficult to counter without the use of fire-arms. A burglar, for instance, caught unawares would very quickly find himself the helpless victim of a well-cast lariat.

But its chief use is for catching cattle and horses. It is an essential part of the daily routine of cattle farms and horse ranches the world over, and nothing better or more practical has been found to replace it. Of course, most of the work with a lariat is done from horseback. Nevertheless, it is much used on foot, and in any case the Scout or Guide who learns to handle one, may well have the opportunity of doing so on horseback one day.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this book, suitable lariats can be bought from the Scout Head-quarters or Scout shops.

The word lariat is derived from the Spanish

"riata" which means "rope." Lariats in use on ranches are often made of strips of raw hide plaited together, or of hemp or hair, also of cactus fibre called "maguy" ropes, but the ropes sold by the Scout shops are just as efficient: also they are cheaper and probably easier to manipulate. Anyone who professes to handle a rope at all should make himself efficient at lassoing, and apart from the fascination of the art, there are numerous occasions when such ability may be the means of saving life, and when nothing else would be of any use.

Such proficiency may well prove of inestimable service in an emergency, and only recently the writer saw a man rescued from certain death on the cliffs in Cornwall, owing to the rescuer's ability to throw a rope with accuracy.

It is great sport anyway, and the learner should first of all make himself proficient in swinging the noose or loop, and then practise catching stationary and finally moving objects.

CHAPTER VIII

How To Use The Lariat

By Don Potter

The proper way to hold the lasso has been described on page 74. The coils of surplus rope must be held in the left hand, and retained in such a way that when the loop is thrown the coils will freely unwind themselves.

Before throwing the loop at the target, it should be swung round and round at an angle of 45 degrees to the ground and in an anti-clockwise circle. In this way the end of the loop will pass above the head, and just clear the ground about 3 feet from the right side. The loop is released as the right hand comes upwards and just about when it is level with the right shoulder.

Practise throwing the loop over a fixed object such as a pole in the ground, a chair,

or over anyone who will consent to act as a mark. If it is properly thrown, it will settle down over the victim's shoulders without hurting him in any way. Gradually increase the distance of the throw, until you get to the extreme limit of the lariat. An ordinary lariat is about 35 feet long.

Next make the same series of catches whilst moving yourself. Walk up to the target at varying speeds, and then cross it from left to right, and vice versa, also at varying speeds, until you can make a catch on the run from all angles.

Next, get your target to move past you at fast and slow speeds. Do not be content simply to make the catch : see that the loop flies through the air, and drops well round the object aimed at.

Excellent practice can be obtained by getting someone to ride past you on a bicycle and try to get away without being caught. You can also make your catches whilst riding a cycle yourself.

Continual practice is the key to efficiency, and the Scout or Guide who is keen on becoming an expert with a lariat will find

Rope Leaving the Hand for a Flat Catch

continual amusement by trying to lasso every object stationary or moving which comes within his or her purview, from the sun-dial in the garden to the family dog or cat. Be careful when trying to rope an animal not to hurt it. If you see that it is really frightened leave it alone, or try to get it accustomed to the idea. The writer's dog now regards the matter as a huge joke, and rushes round in circles as soon as the lariat starts whirling. As a result he is extremely hard to catch, and makes an excellent target.

Use as light a honda as possible; in fact, you can throw a lariat successfully with the honda made only of the rope knotted into a slip knot. A heavy honda may inflict a severe bruise, and does not make catching any easier.

Be careful not to rope a horse that is not accustomed to it. The horses you will see being roped in circuses and rodeos are all accustomed to being caught, but a horse that has had no experience will plunge and struggle to the best of his ability as soon as he feels a rope round him.

The lariat can be thrown in two main ways: either tossed forward from rest, or whirled round the head and then launched at the target.

To toss the rope from rest, hold by the ordinary lasso grip, but have the rope trailing behind on the right side, palm of the hand down. When within range of the target, or as it comes within range, sweep the right arm forward and upward, and launch the rope towards it. See that the honda is to the front, and you can much assist the movement by taking a step forward with the left foot and inclining the whole body forwards as well. Do not make a jerky movement—sweep the loop away from you. A little practice will soon enable you to drop the noose over your target. As you experiment with targets at varying distances and moving at different speeds, you will very shortly throw the rope instinctively at the right moment.

Most of the catches done on foot are tossed from rest in this way.

The chief object in whirling the rope round your head is to keep the noose distended either

Rope Ready for Throw with Foot

when you are moving yourself (as on horseback, or when chasing your quarry) or to keep the noose distended when you are using a big loop.

Again, a very little practice will show you when to throw with the lariat whirling round your head. The best moment to throw is when the right hand has completed its circle round the head, and is just rising from its lowest position on the right side.

As soon as you can catch one person running past you, use a rather bigger loop and get two people to run close side by side and catch them. You can increase the number up to four and even five, but they will have to run in a tight bunch. When catching in this way, it is very important that your victims do not pull up as soon as they see the loop is encircling them. They are sure to do so, unless you warn them not to. Tell them to keep up full speed and do their utmost to avoid being caught. This is much better practice for you, and when you have made a catch, you have the satisfaction of seeing the noose tighten round your target by itself. In this way the true function of the loop is brought into play.

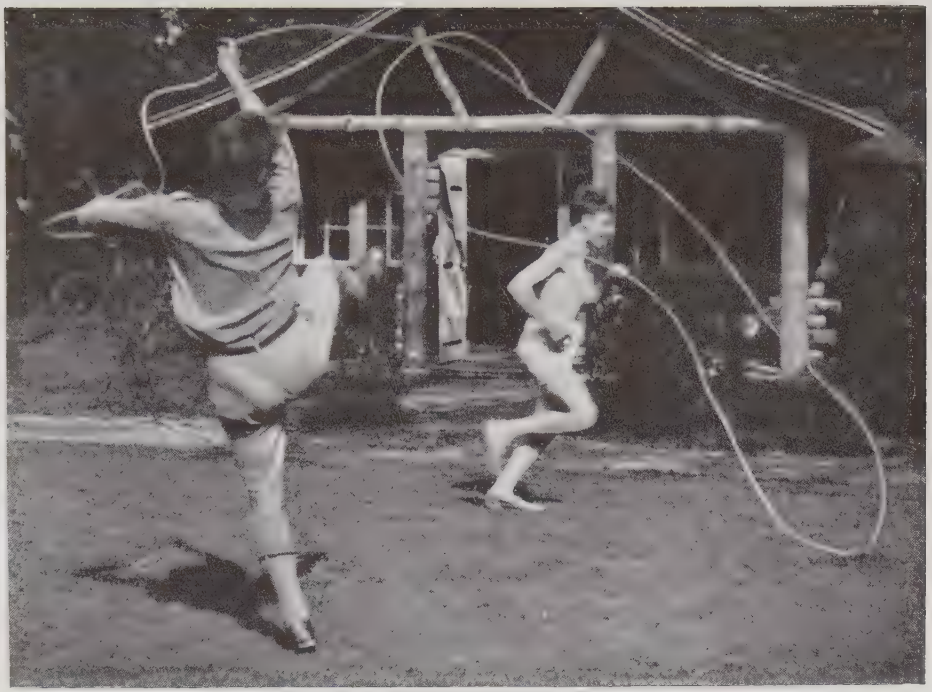
A description has now been given of how to throw the noose whilst whirling it round the head, and also how to toss it from rest. There are one or two other methods.

Throw with the Foot

Arrange the rope as for the toss from rest, lay the loop on the ground, and let go with the right hand. Insert the right foot into the loop exactly where the right hand was holding. Stand with the left foot advanced. If you now swing the right foot forward, you can launch the noose in the same way that you have been doing with the right hand.

Catch from Ocean Wave

In order to make this catch you must be expert in spinning the Ocean Wave. Let your target pass your right side, spin the Ocean Wave, and as the loop passes across the back, let it continue straight on to the target. This requires a great deal of practice, and the timing must be exact, or you will not make the catch.



Rope Being Thrown by Foot

The Rolling Catch

This looks very well. Hold the rope as for starting a Flat Spin, but on the right side of the body, and to the rear. As your target runs past you, bring the right hand up and over, and then out towards it. The effect will be to roll a loop along the ground, and if you time it properly, your quarry will run into it, the top of the loop catching him across the waist.

Naturally the loop must be kept low. The loop should roll along the ground exactly like a big cartwheel. As soon as the catch has been made, pull on the spoke and you will have your victim securely caught round the legs.

The Hog Tie

As soon as you have made a catch round the legs, and thrown your target to the ground, you can proceed to tie him up securely, by throwing a series of knots round his arms and legs without approaching him or letting go of the rope.

The best way to practise this useful stunt is as follows. Get someone to stand in front of you, and throw a noose over his shoulders

and draw it tight. Now get him to hold out his left arm towards you. Raise the right hand, bring it up to your head, and then make a throwing motion forwards, exactly as if you were throwing a cricket ball. Allow plenty of slack rope and throw well to the right. This will cause a loop to travel down the rope, and tie a half hitch round your assistant's right arm.

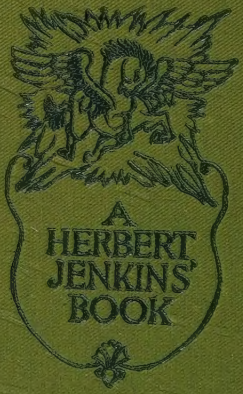
You can do the same thing to his left arm, and both legs in succession. To assist you, he must raise first one foot and then the other.

Finally you can get him to jump, keeping his legs together, and you can throw a quick loop down the rope, and tie a half hitch round both his ankles at once.

As soon as you have become expert in throwing these hitches at a stationary target, you can hog tie anyone who has been caught and is struggling on the ground, by selecting an arm or leg that looks catchable and throwing a series of hitches until you have him bound and helpless.

The more you use a lasso, the better you will like it. DON POTTER.

FINIS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